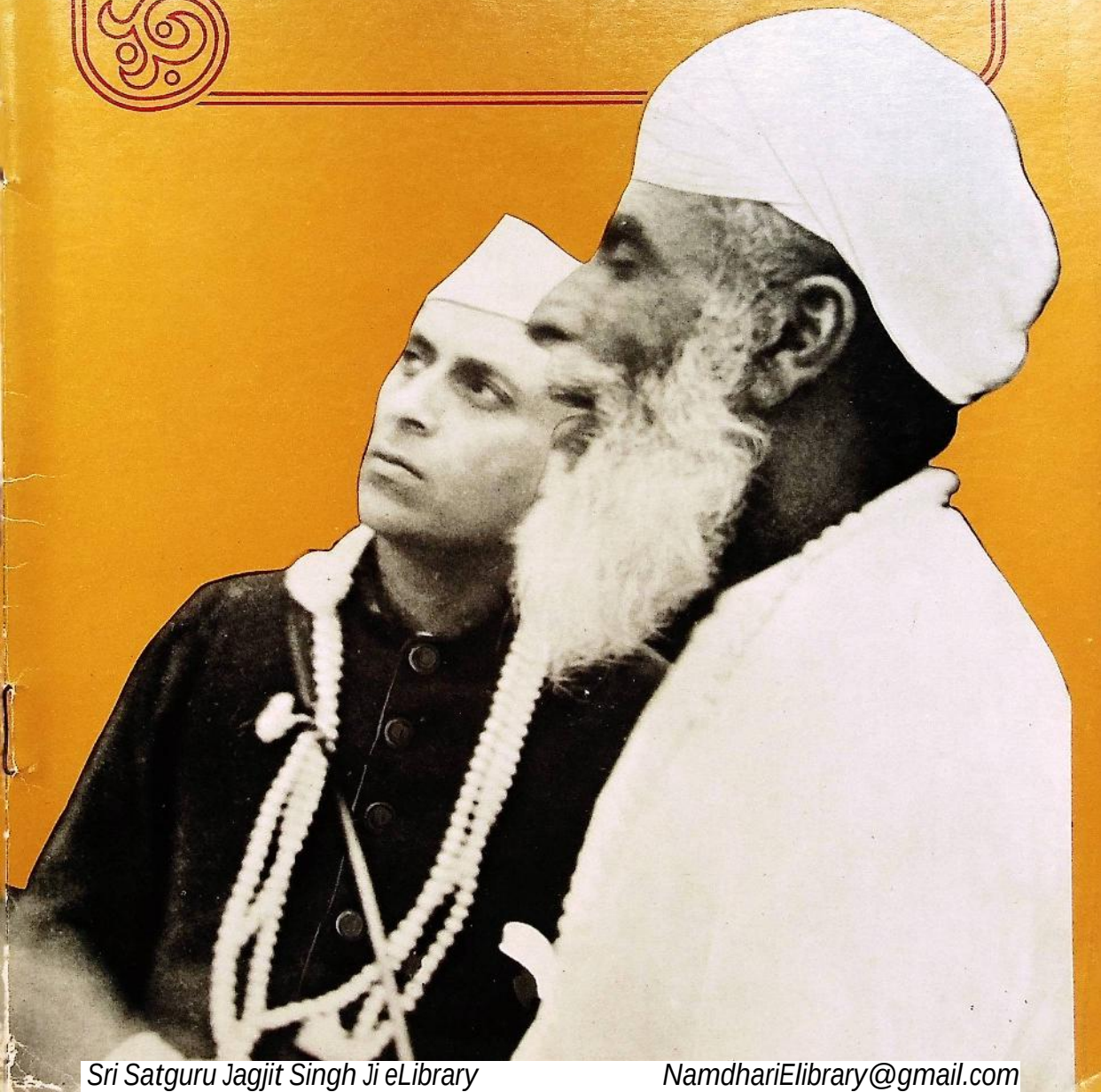
NAMDHARIS

BEFORE AND AFTER INDEPENDENCE



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During the World War in 1914, the British Government tried to appease the Kukas by land grants and through some other means, but failed and have to use a tyrant's rod.

'The history of Modern India'
by G.S. Chhabra.

...They (Namdharis) inculcate a very strict morality, condemning most strongly, lying, theft, and adultry, and appear anxious merely to revive the Sikh Religion in its original state of purity and to eradicate the errors which have from time to time defiled it...

(Inspector General of Police 20.1.1868).

The Truth is that it is not possible for a Kuka to be loyal subject of the British Government.

(Ludhiana District Gazetteer 1904)

Published by Shri H.S. Hanspal, General Secretary, Namdhari Darbar, Sri Bhaini Sahib, Punjab, (India), and printed by Punjabi Press, New Delhi-110 055.

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I see in the earlier papers that (Guru) Ram Singh was looked upon as a successor or actual embodiment of Guru Nanak, the saint. He is now the representative of Govind, the warrior.

—J.W. Macnabb
(Commissioner Ambala-1871)

"Not only was the whole of Panjab apportioned into about 70 soobas or provinces through which the Guru's Lieutenants actively itinerated, preaching the speedy restoration of the Khalsa rule, and enlisting all the thews and sinews of the Sikh race . . . emissaries were sent to Kashmir, Kabul and Nepal. The secret postal arrangements were perfect, so that the orders of the Guru reached with astonishing rapidity in the remotest corner of the province . . .

—Forsyth
(Chief Commissioner of Ambala-1872)

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NAMDHARIS

BEFORE AND AFTER INDEPENDENCE

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ਸ੍ਰੀ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਰਾਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਸਹਾਇ ।

The Founder

Satguru Ram Singh Ji

(Exiled in 1872)

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Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

प्रधान मन्त्री भारत
PRIME MINISTER,
INDIA.

MESSAGE

Our freedom movement gathered strength by attracting every important section of society from every region. The contribution of the Namdhari sect of Sikhs to the movement has been specially significant and unique in its own way.

I am glad to know that a pictorial record of this contribution is being published in book-form.

Indira Gandhi

(Indira Gandhi)

New Delhi
16th March, 1981

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Satguru Partap Singh Ji

(1889-1959)

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The Namdharis

Namdhari Sikhs have an honoured place in the history of India's struggle for freedom. They were the first to evolve non-cooperation and the use of Swadeshi as political weapons. As early as the 1860's they boycotted British goods, Government schools, law courts and postal services. They emphasised on the wearing of hand-spun *khadi* 60 years before it was taken up by Mahatma Gandhi.

The Namdharis are a body of puritanical Sikhs adhering strictly to the teachings of the Sikh Gurus. Their gurdwaras are not ostentatious and they do not indulge in use of rich canopies or silk coverings for the *Granth Sahib* or any other ritual smacking of idolatry. They lead austere lives, wear the simplest of white *khāddar* cloths, wear no ornaments, save rosaries made of *wool.* Their marriages are performed without fanfare of *barats,* bands and receptions and cost no more than Rs. 13 per nuptial performed. They are punctilious in attending services in their gurdwaras and in observing the tabus of food, drink and personal deportment: they are strict Vegetarians, totally abstain from the use of alcohol and tobacco.

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The Namdhari movement began in the N.W.F.P. in the last days of the Sikh rule as a protest against the licentious style of living of the Sikh aristocracy and assumptions of divinity by the Bedi and Sodhi descendants of the Gurus. After the annexation of the Panjab by the British, the Namdharis under the leadership of Satguru Ram Singh moved their headquarters to village Bhaini in Ludhiana district. It was Satguru Ram Singh who introduced changes in the forms of worship and address which distinguish his followers from the general body of sikhs. Like *sufi derveshis,* the Namdharis chanted hymns and often attained the state of *hal* or ecstasy when they emitted shrieks (*kooks* hence the word *kooka* for Namdharis). They began to wear only spotless white *khadi* and retained their style of turbans to original flat band type across the forehead.

The Namdharis clashed with the British authorities in several bloody encounters. Sixty-six of them were blown off by canons and Satguru Ram Singh exiled to Burma in 1872.

Satguru Ram Singh was succeeded by his younger brother, Satguru Hari Singh who was confined to his village Bhaini for all the years of his leadership of the sect and was succeeded by his son Satguru Pratap Singh (d 1959). The present head of the Namdharis is Satguru Jagjit Singh. The Namdharis maintain two centres, one at Sri Bhaini Sahib, district Ludhiana and the other at Sri Jiwan Nagar in district Sirsa. They publish four journals. They are a well-knit community of farmers, artisans, contractors and cattle-breeders and businessmen now spread to distant corners of the globe.

Khushwant Singh
M.P.

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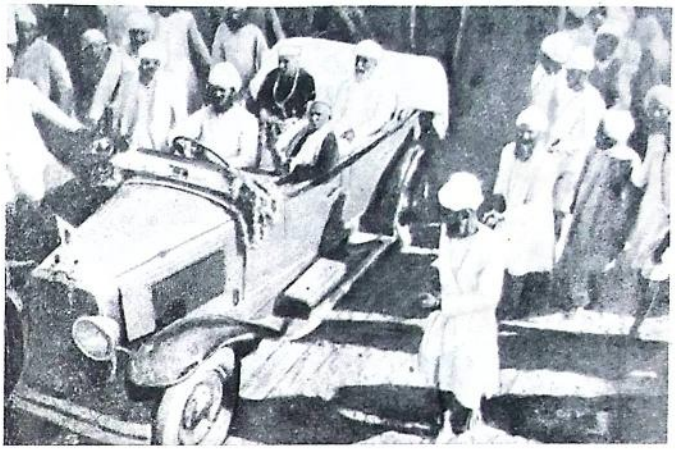
Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru and Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya visited Namdhari Headquarters, Sri Bhaini Sahib, District Ludhiana to seek guidance and receive blessings from Satguru Partap Singhji during freedom struggle. 17-2-1931



Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru with Satguru Partap singh Ji on way to attend the State Peoples Conference at Ludhiana. procession organized under the auspices of Namdhari Darbar.

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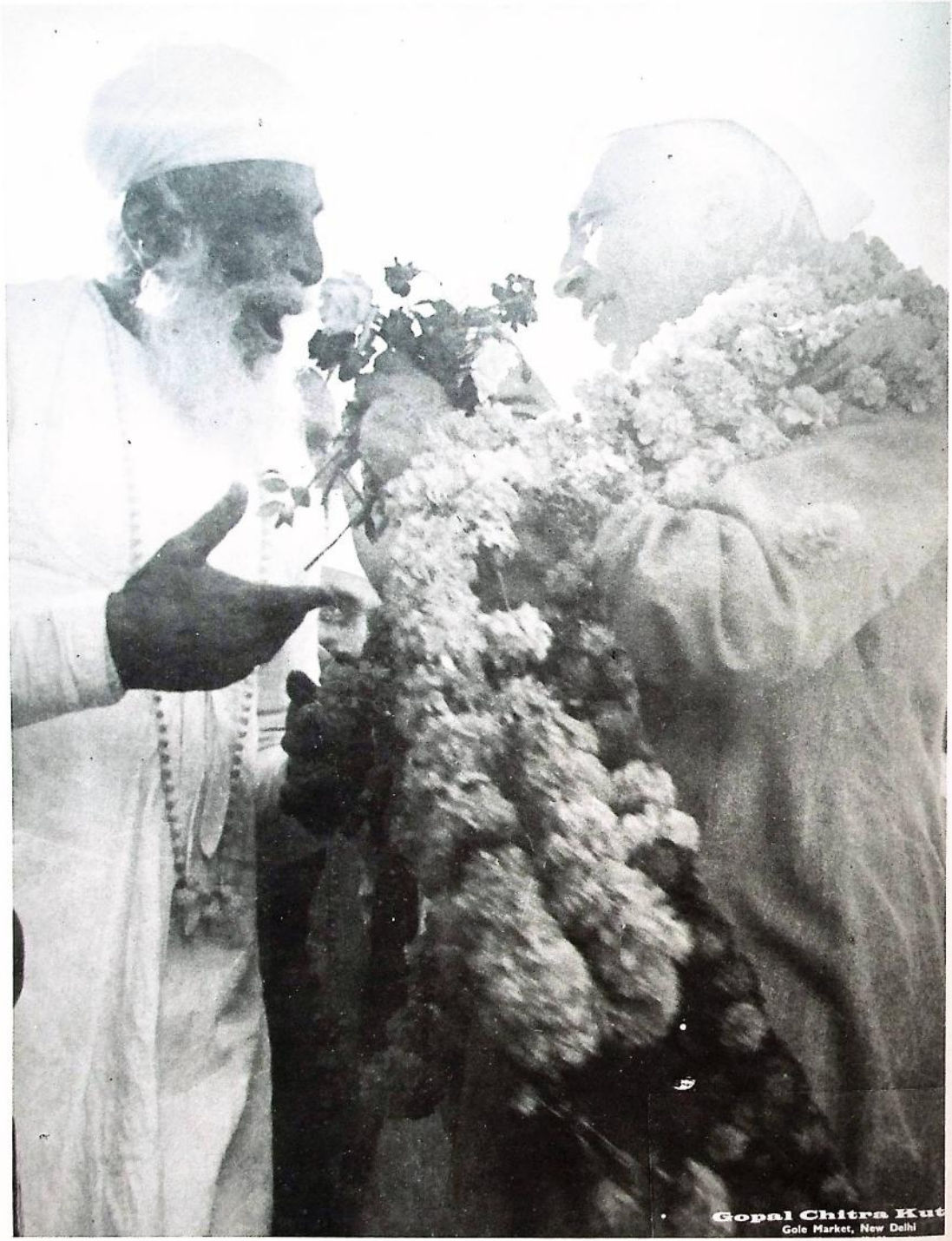

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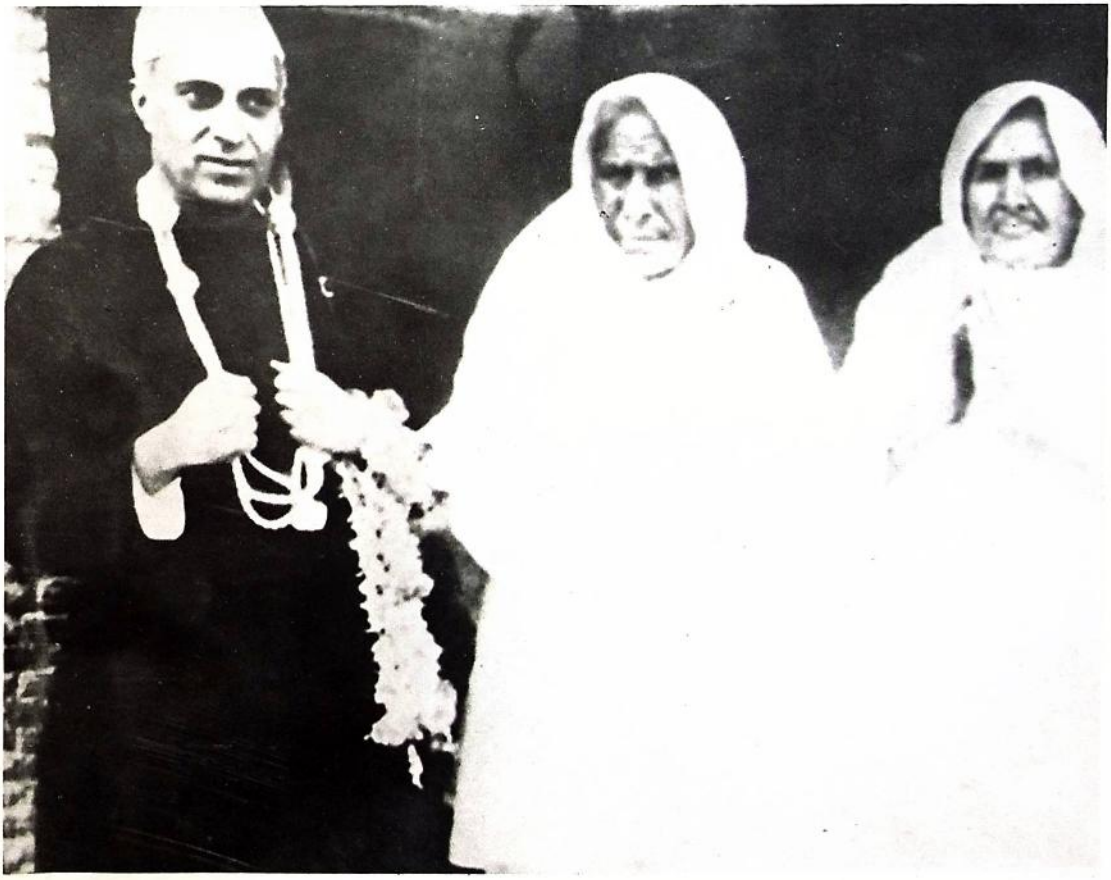
Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru receiving blessings of Satguru Partap Singh Ji on his birthday.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru deriving inspiration from Mata Jeewan Kaur Ji and Mata Fateh Kaur Ji, who played a prominent role during the Freedom Struggle, on a visit to Sri Bhaini Sahib.



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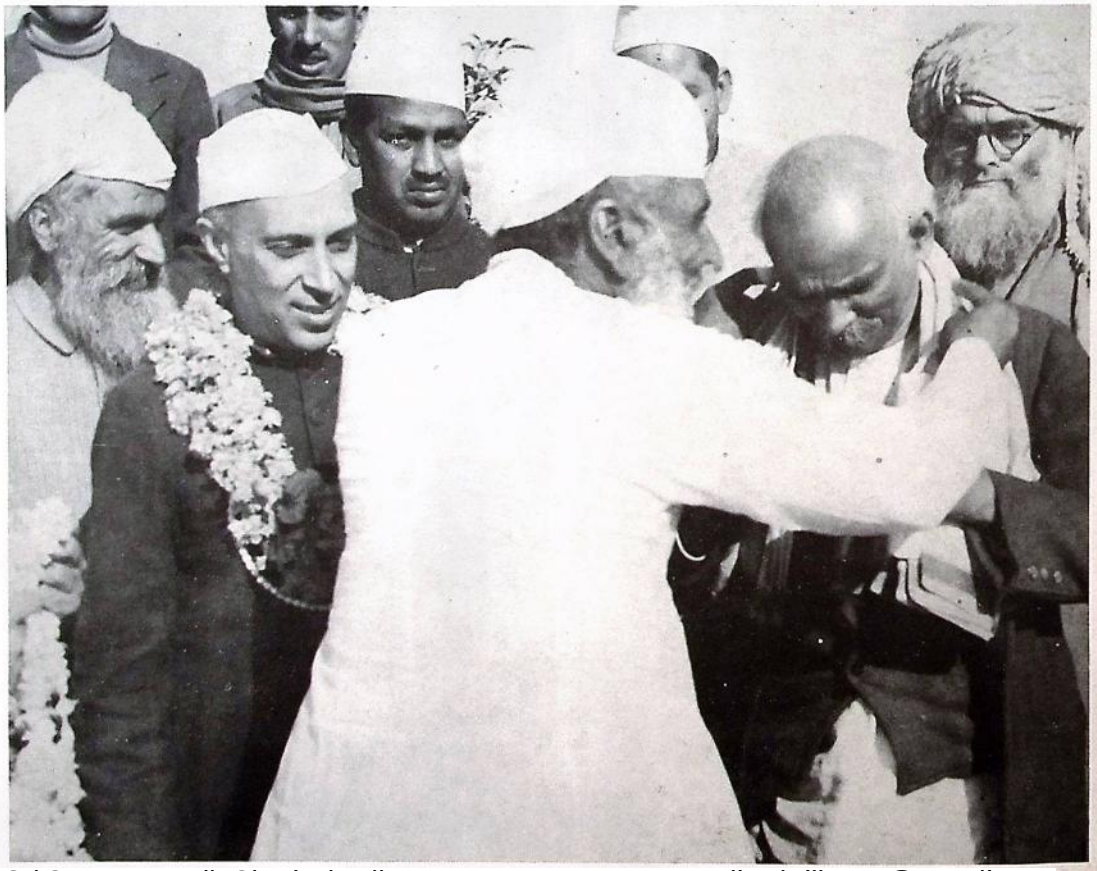
Welcomed visitors to Namdhari Headquarters at Sri Bhaini Sahib are Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya and others.



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An affectionate get-together.

Being the champion of Swadeshi Movement, Satguru Partap Singh Ji along with Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru attending the inauguration of Indian Hosiery Machine Makers' Factory at Ludhiana of Mr. M. Nur Mohd.

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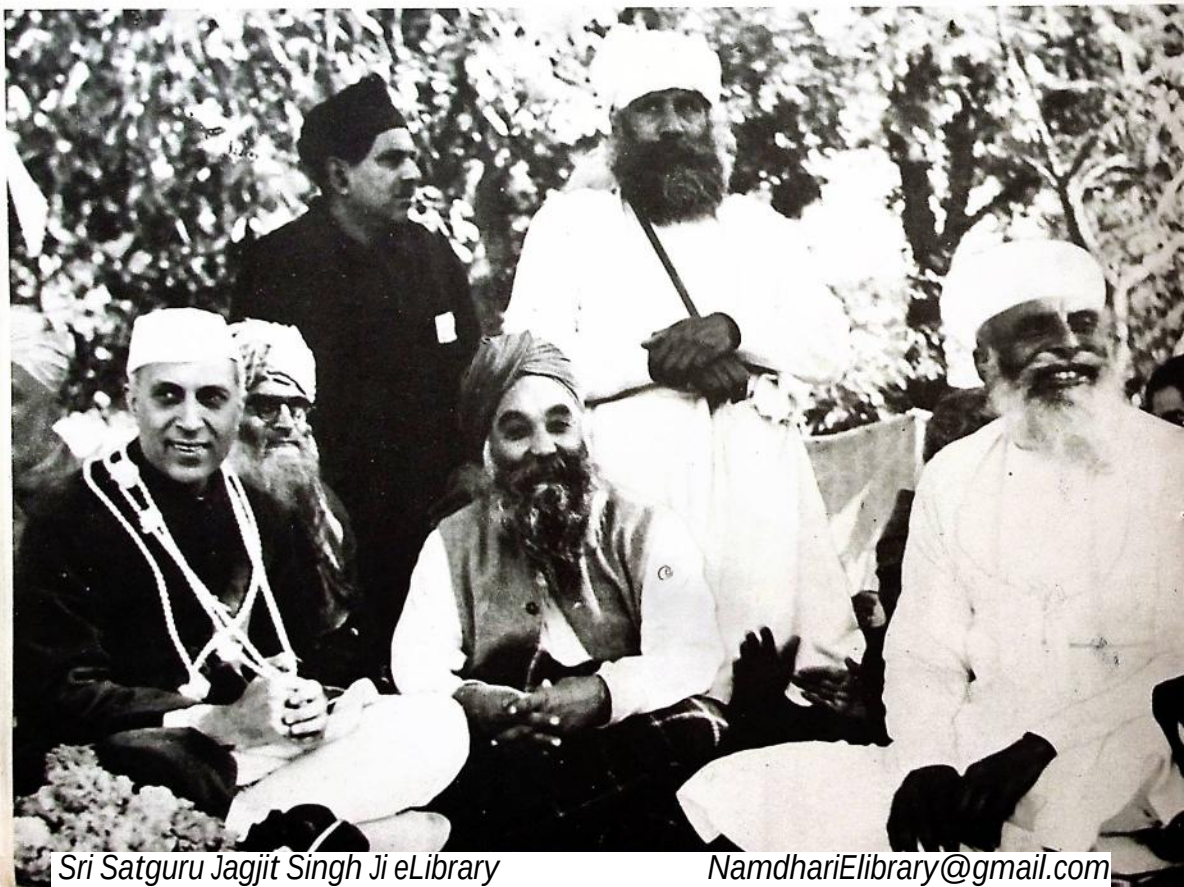
Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, master Tara Singh and Dr. Saiffuddin Kichlew and Maulana Habibullah—a secular get-together at Sri Bhaini Sahib—with Satguru Partap Singh Ji.



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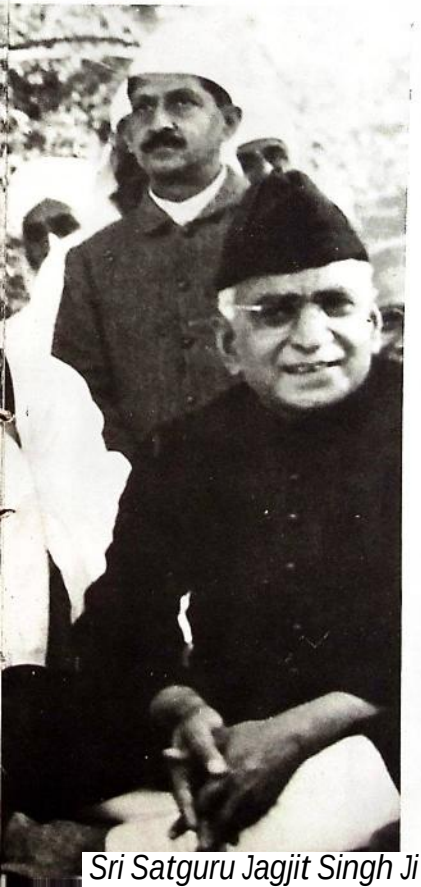
After Independence Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru paid a visit to Sri Bhaini Sahib alongwith Smt. Indira Gandhi, to offer thanks for cooperation and guidance with Satguru Partap Singh Ji and present Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji.



Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru with Maharaj Nihal Singh Ji Member of Parliament.

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Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji—

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Satguru Ram Singh Ji was exiled by the Britishers in 1872 and the Indian National Congress, under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, adopted His programme of Swadeshi, Non-Cooperation and Boycott. Thereafter, Namdhari Sikhs continued their struggle for the liberation of the country from the yoke of foreign rule alongside the Indian National Congress. The sacrifices of the Namdhari Sikhs shook the British rule of the time, resulting in imposition of various restrictions and discriminations against them. In fact, Namdhari Headquarter Sri Bhaini Sahib near Ludhiana became an active seat of carrying on the independence struggle in the Northern India. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru several times visited Sri Bhaini Sahib to seek the blessings and guidance of Satguru Partap Singh Ji, and also evolve a joint strategy to accelerate the process of achieving the noble goal of independent India.

Sri Bhaini Sahib was quite a safe place for many national leaders who took refuge and remained underground during the pre-independence difficult days.

In 1929, on the banks of river Ravi at Lahore, Indian National Congress organized its annual session, where for the first time it was decided and declared that nothing short of complete independence was acceptable to the people of India. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was elected President of the National Congress for the first time in this session. A large section of Sikhs boycotted the Congress Session at Lahore, while Namdharis, under directions of Satguru Partap Singh ji, reached Lahore in thousands and arranged everything required to make the session a grand success. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was taken in procession through the streets of Lahore on a special horse provided by Satguru ji, specially brought from Sri Bhaini Sahib for the occasion, and followed by hundreds of Namdharis on horsebacks. Pandit Ji was enormously impressed by the co-operation of Namdhari Sikhs and thereafter he made it a point to visit Sri Bhaini Sahib during his tours of Punjab and meet Satguru Ji.

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The traditional faith, friendship and co-operation continued between the present Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji and Smt. Indira Gandhi during her tenure from 1966 to 1977 as Prime Minister of India for the betterment and uplift of the countrymen.

When Smt. Indira Gandhi visited U.K. in 1978, again a section of Sikhs demonstrated against her with black flags, while the Namdhari Sikhs living in U.K. welcomed her warmly and assured all co-operation and possible help in and outside the country.

Shri Sanjay Gandhi came in contact with Satguru Ji in 1974 for the first time and became so impressed and interested that whenever there was an occasion he would call on His Holiness and seek guidance and inspiration without reservations. In difficult days when Smt. Indira Gandhi was not in power, His Holiness would send his blessings and provide strength to face the situation. Shri Sanjay Gandhi was reminded of his family's illustrious past, the leadership provided by Pandit Ji and the pragmatic approach of Smt. Indira Gandhi to the problems facing the nation.

Namdhari Sikhs have all along been supporting the visionary policies of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and continued to support the good work initiated by Smt. Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India, which is a source of pride for all Indians. It is fortunate for us all that Smt. Indira Gandhi re-orientated our thinking and has revolutionized the pace of eradicating the various ills of the community. We have no doubt that Mrs. Indira Gandhi, with the blessings of His Holiness, will surmount the difficult tasks ahead of her in short time. Namdharis need not stress their continued co-operation to the Congress and its policies for the betterment of the nation at large.

Harvendra Singh Hanspal
M.P.

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The growing affection and warmth.

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Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji after receiving Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Prime Minister of India during Basant Celebrations in January 1963 in New Delhi.

Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru during the celebrations of Basant Panchmi in 1963 in New Delhi. Also seen in the pictures are Sardar Hukam Singh, Speaker and Maharaj Bir Singh Ji.

A portayal of complete understanding.

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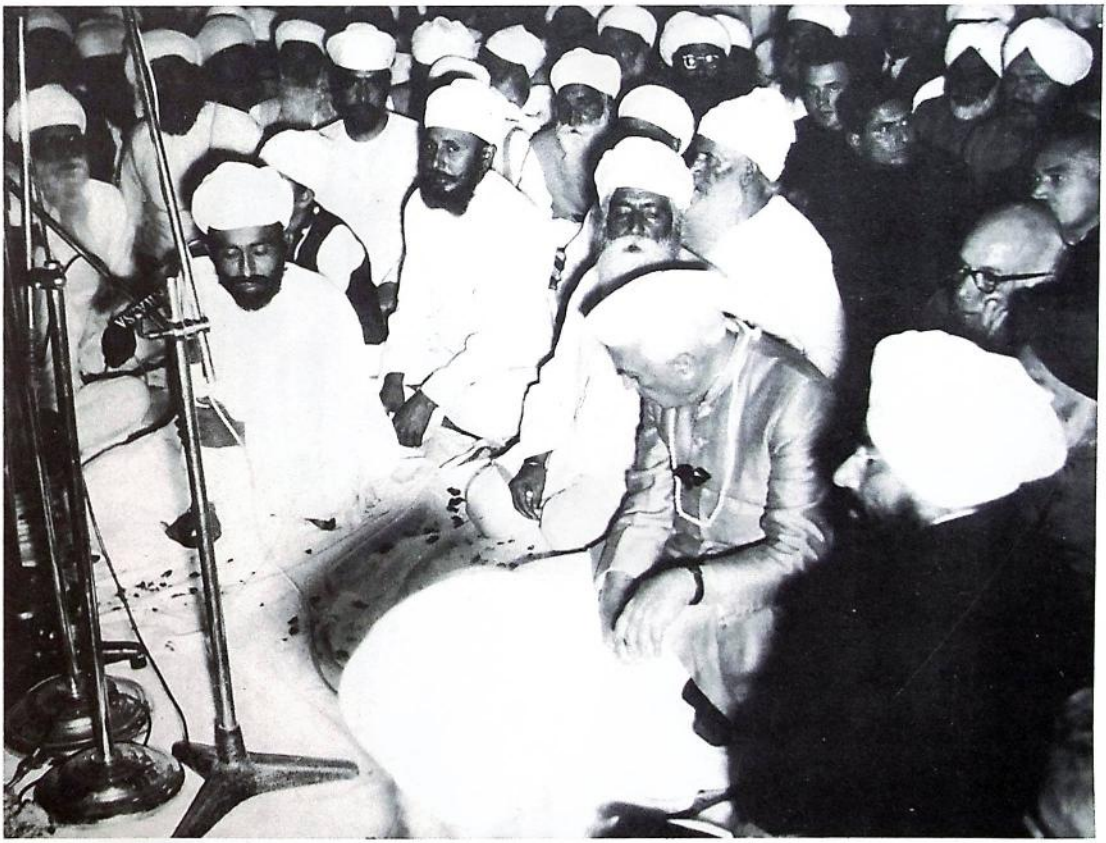
Sri Satguru ji
Introducing Thakur Dalip Singh to
Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

Pandit Ji and Giani Zail Singh
with Namdhari Sangat listening to
His discourse.



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Seth Tarlok Singh Chawla, a prominent Namdhari, paying a courtesy call during his visit to India with a Thai Trade Delegation from Bangkok in 1954.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru receiving a cheque from Maharaj Bir Singh Ji towards the National Defence Fund during 1963.

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Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji felicitating Smt. Indira Gandhi on her assumption of the office of the Prime Minister of India in 1966.

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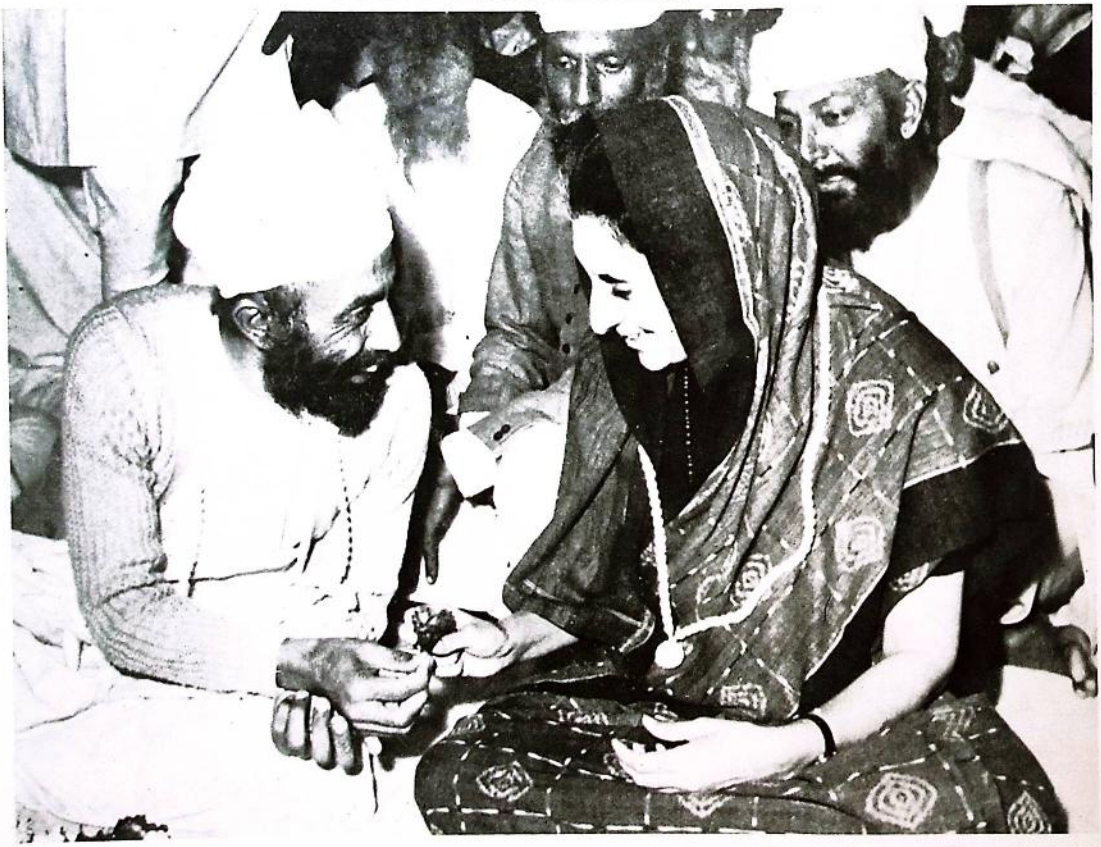
Maharaj Bir Singh Ji taking Mrs. Indira Gandhi around the Namdhari Chitra Pradarshini during Hola celebrations in 1966 in New Delhi.



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Smt. Indira Gandhi with Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji during the Basant Celebrations at Sahibabad. Also seen in the picture is the noted industrialist Shri Kapil Mohan.

Seth Tarlok Singh Chawla and Shri S. Nijlingappa with Smt. Indira Gandhi.

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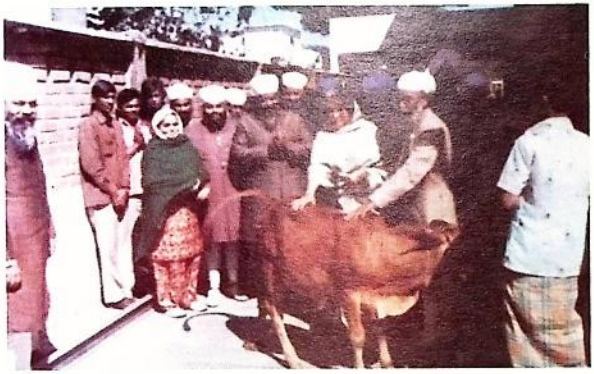
The traditions maintained. In March 1979 Mrs. Indira Gandhi paid a courtesy call on Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji to receive His blessings.



Group of Namdhari youths felicitating Smt. Indira Gandhi after her victory at Chikmaglur.

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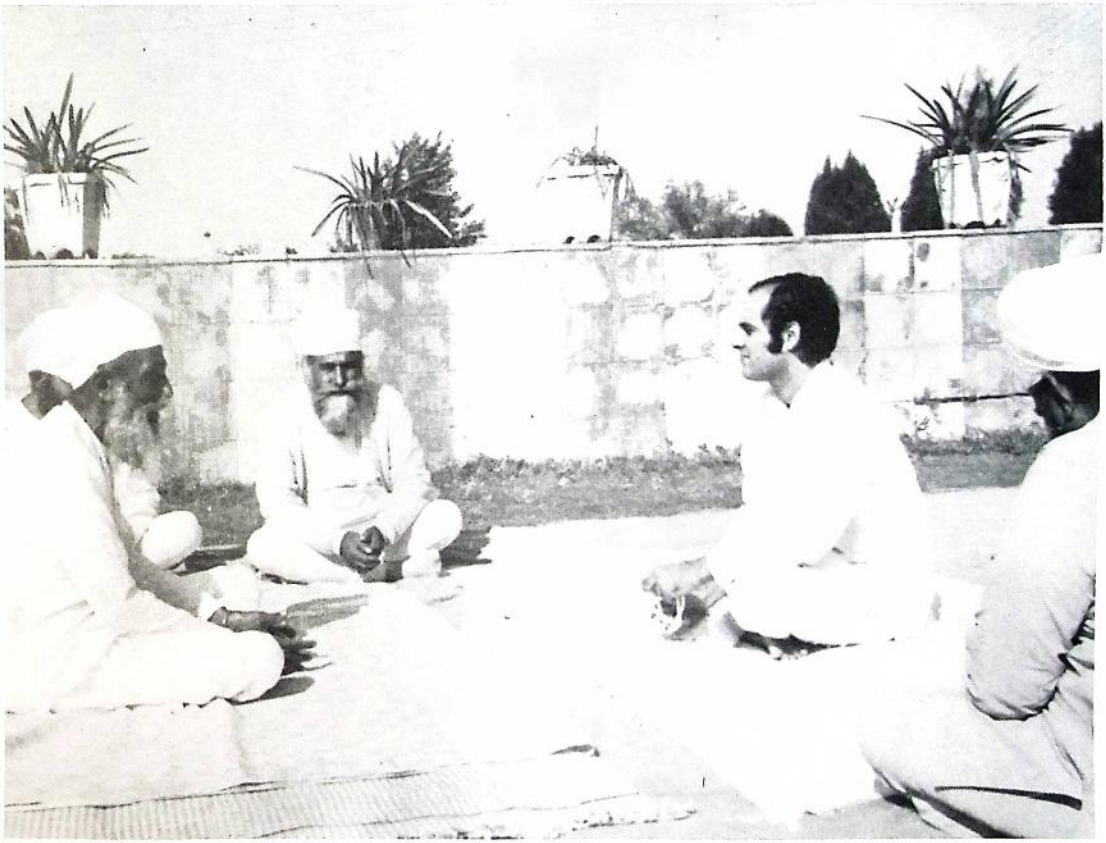
Shri Sanjay Gandhi listening with reverence to Satguru ji in 1974.



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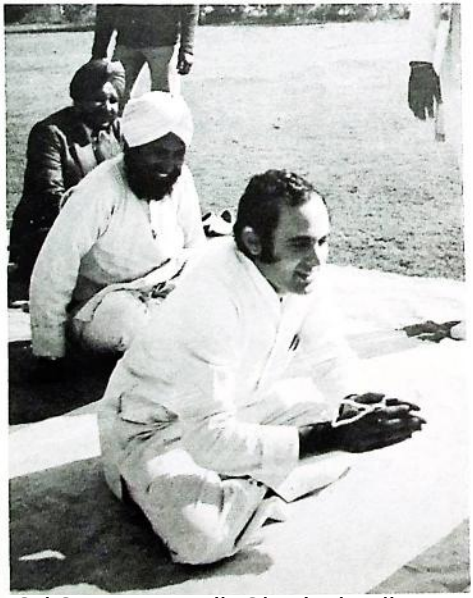

Shri Sanjay Gandhi receiving blessings from Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji.

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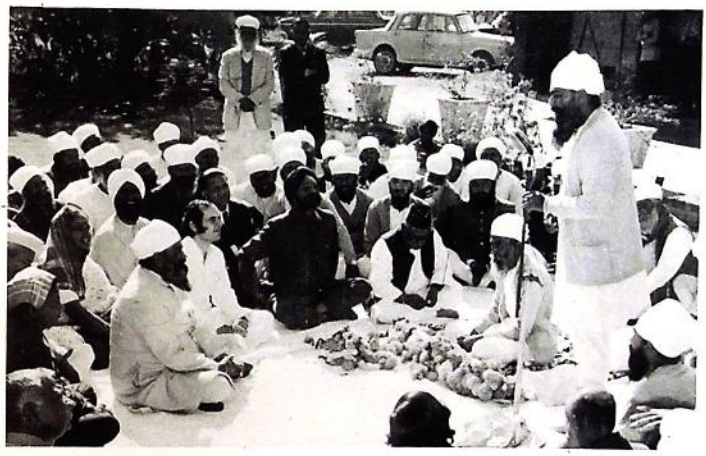
Seth Tarlok Singh Chawla receiving Shri Sanjay Gandhi at his Farm in March 1975.



Sardar Harvendra Singh Hanspal, General Secretary of Namdhari Darbar welcoming Shri Sanjay Gandhi.

Shri Sanjay Gandhi and other dignitaries listening to the preachings of Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji.

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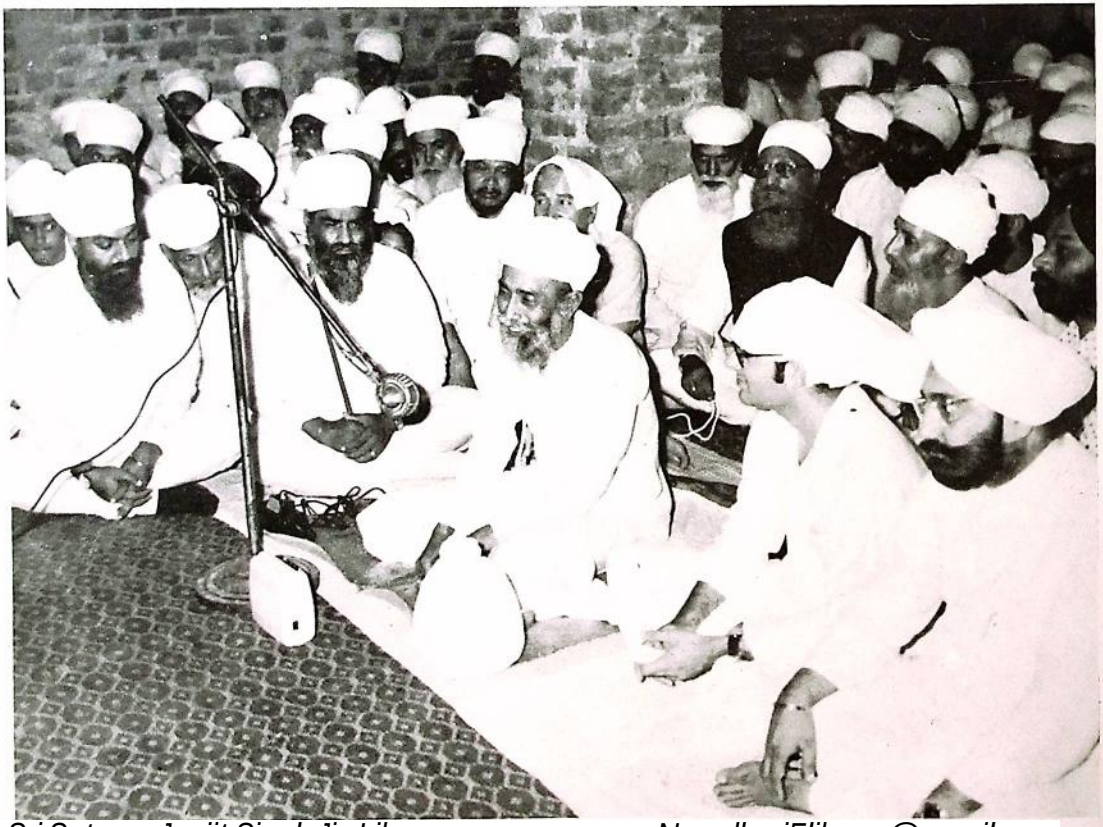
Co-operation continued. Shri Sanjay Gandhi with Satguru Ji and the Namdhari Sangat.



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Shri Sanjay Gandhi called on Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji. to receive blessings and offer thanks after the Grand Come-Back in 1980.

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The great Come-Back.

Shri Harbhajan Singh being introduced to Shri Sanjay Gandhi.

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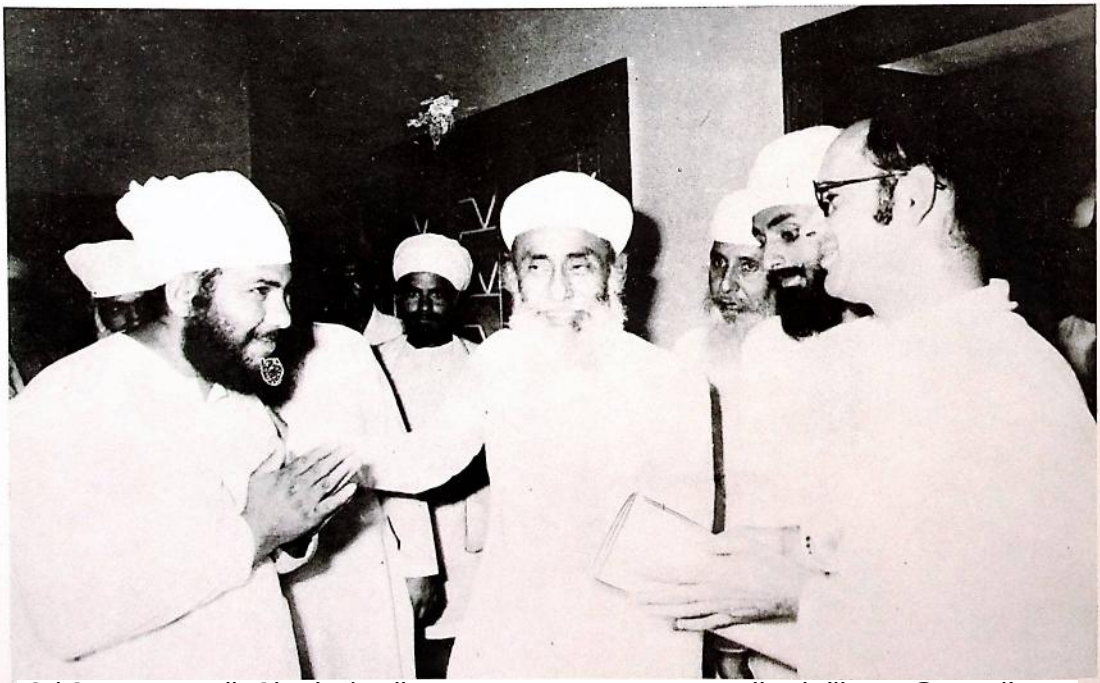
Shri Sanjay Gandhi receiving Maharaj Bir Singh Ji.

Introducing Suba Rattan Singh and Shri Gurdip Singh.



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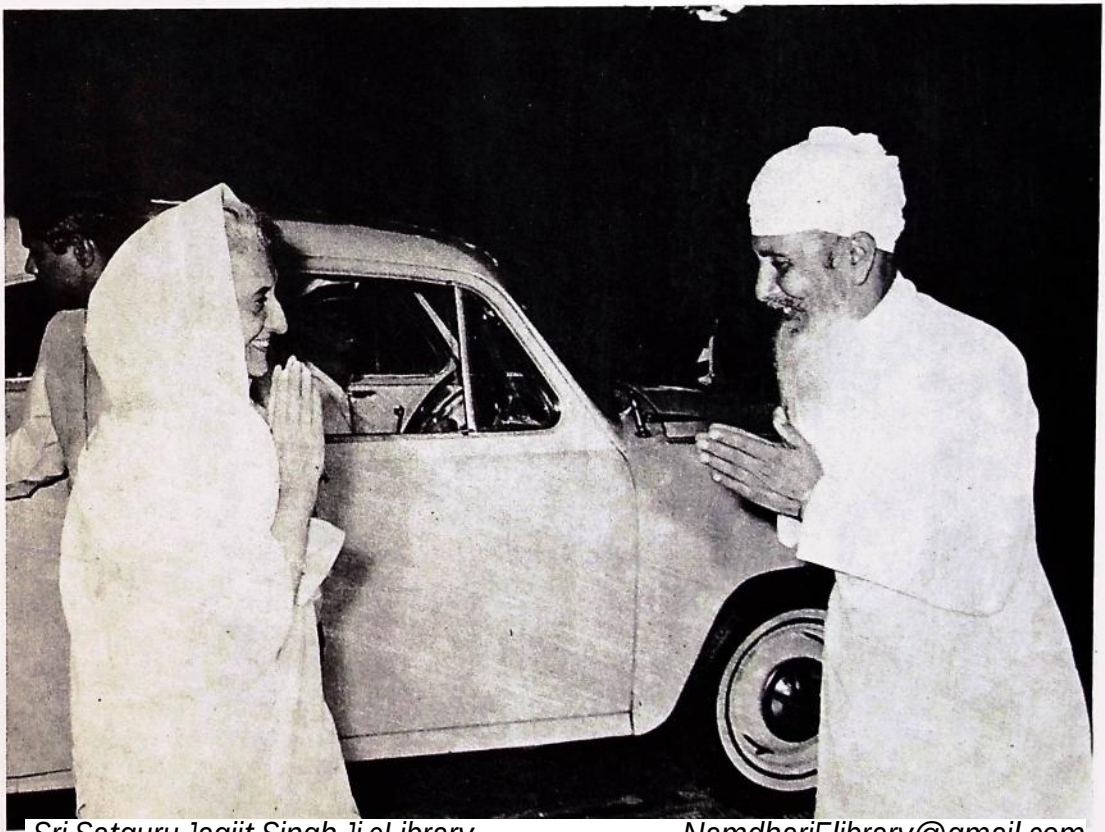
**Namdhari Darbar
Sri Bhaini Sahib
Distt. Ludhiana, Punjab
organized a reception
for honouring
Smt. Indira Gandhi,
Prime Minister
of India, at Vigyan
Bhavan, New Delhi, on
March 27, 1981.**

Maharaj Bir Singh Ji receiving Smt. Indira Gandhi.



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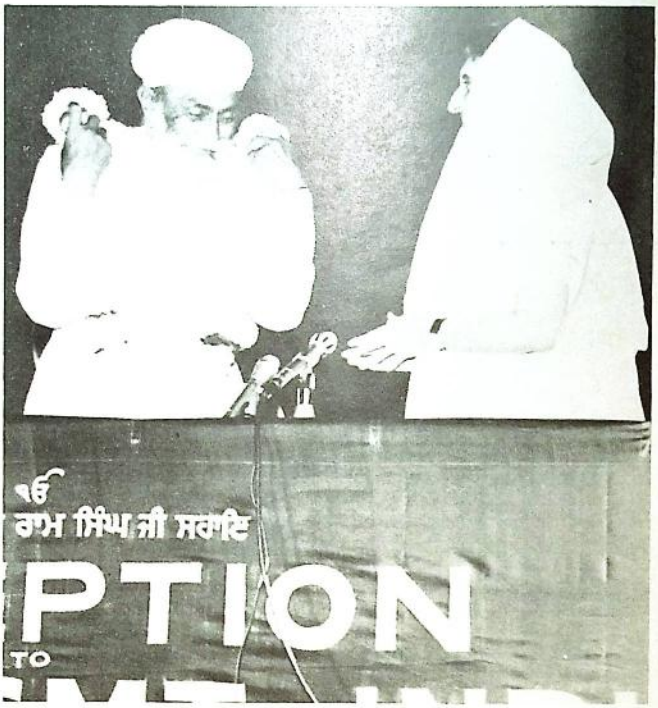
Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi offering garland to His Holiness Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji.



Maharaj Ji, Seth Tarlok Singh Chawla, Shri H.S. Hanspal and Shri Sulakhan Singh escorting Smt. Indira Gandhi to the main Hall.

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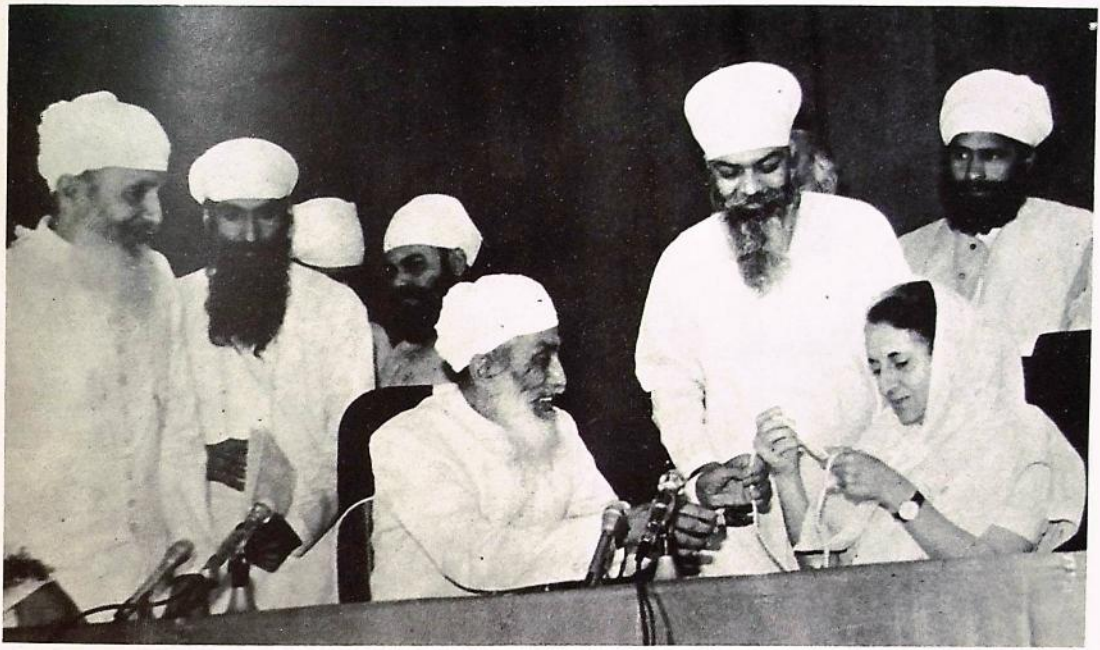
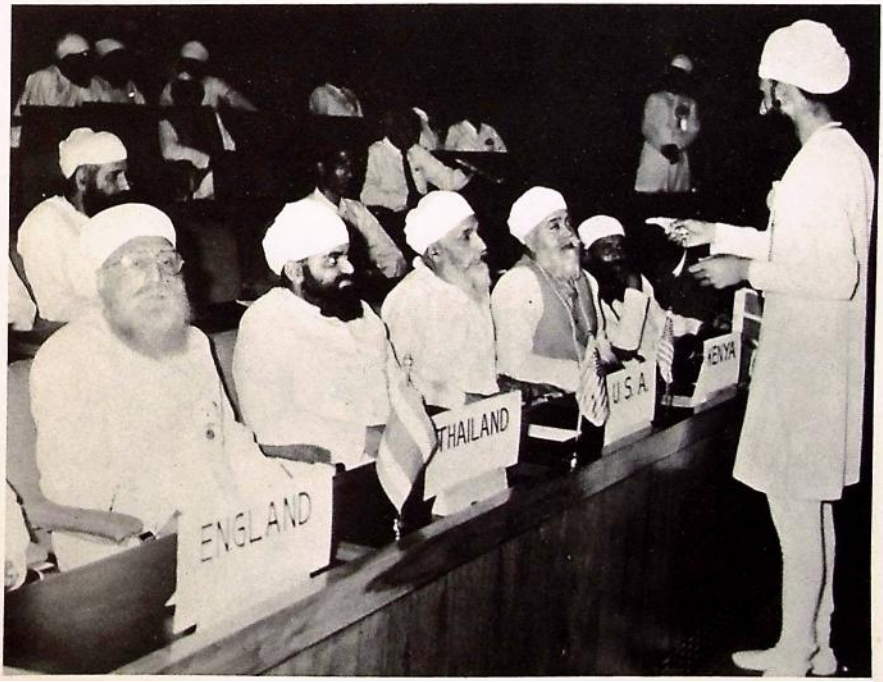


Smt. Indira Gandhi receiving MALA and blessings from Sri Satguru Ji.

Thakur Dalip Singh with foreign delegates.



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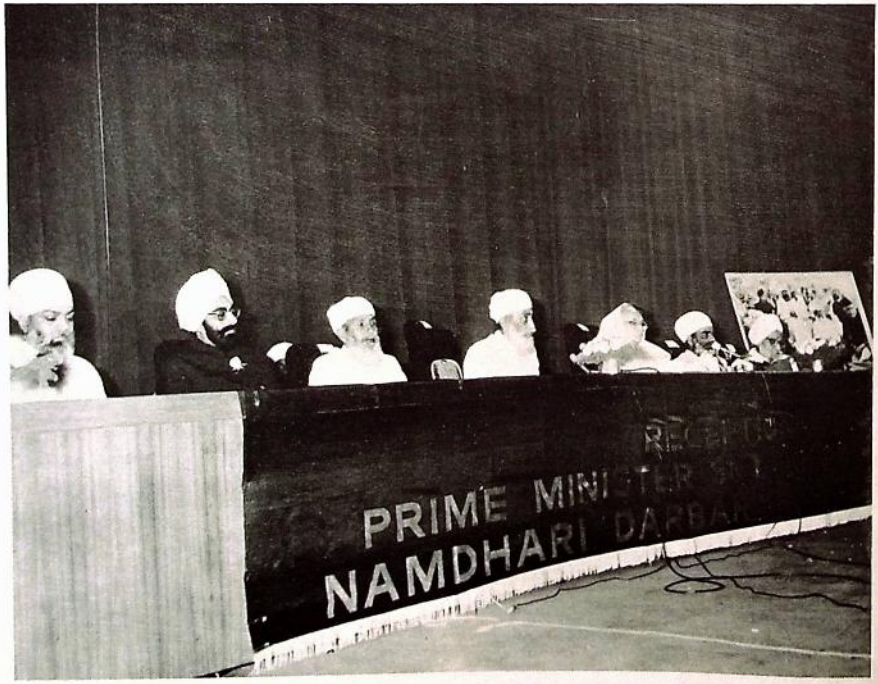
Biba Sahib Kaur, daughter of His Holiness, offering garland to Smt. Gandhi.

Seen at the dais with Sri Satguru Ji and Smt. Indira Gandhi are Giani Zail Singh, Home Minister of India. Sardar Darbara Singh, Chief Minister of Punjab, Maharaj Bir Singh Ji, Seth Tarlok Singh Chawla and Shri H.S. Hanspal, Member of Parliament.



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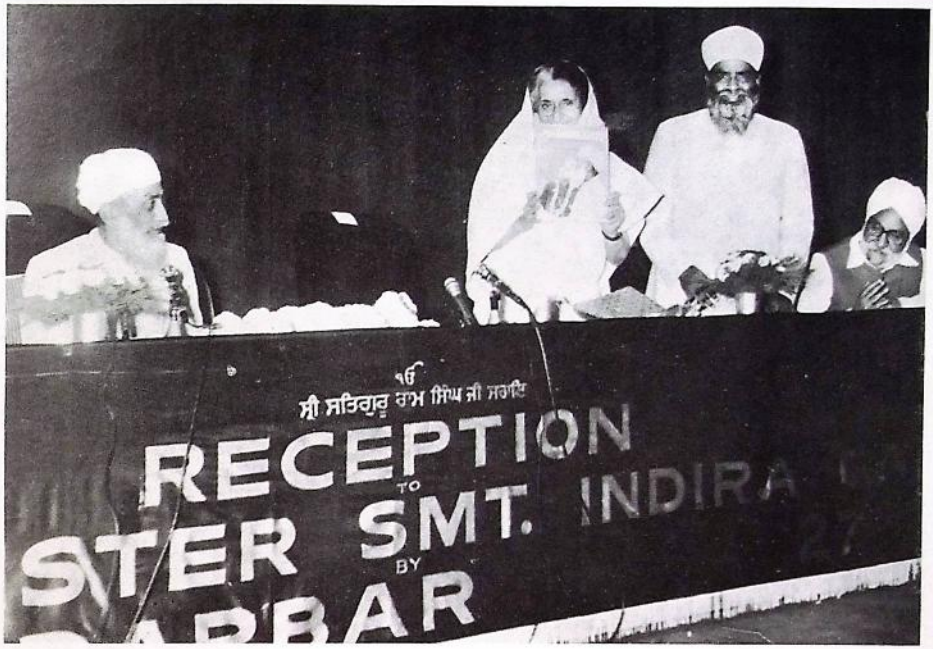
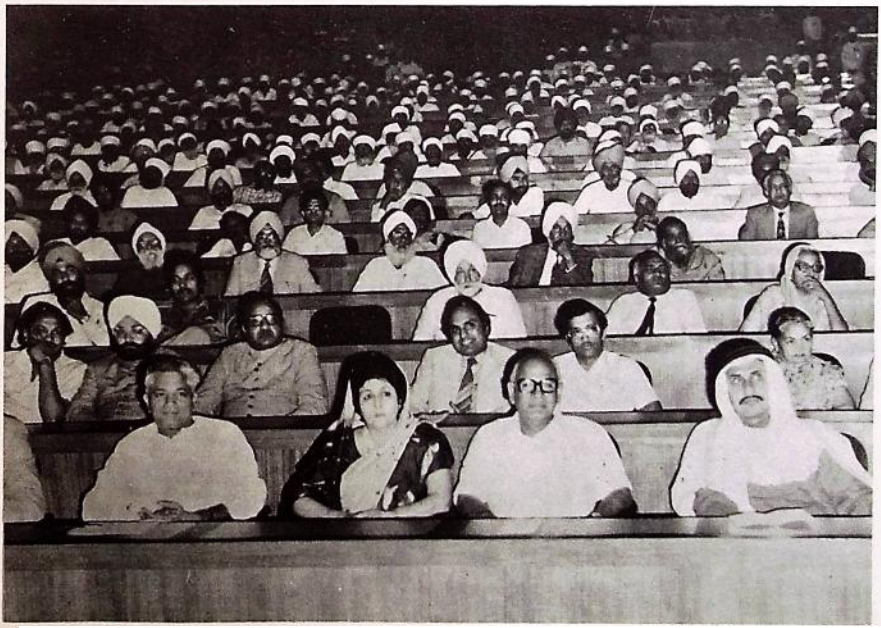


Hon'ble Prime Minister releasing the book "Namdharis— Before and After Independence".

A view of the audience comprising Diplomats, MPs, MLAs and other distinguished guests.



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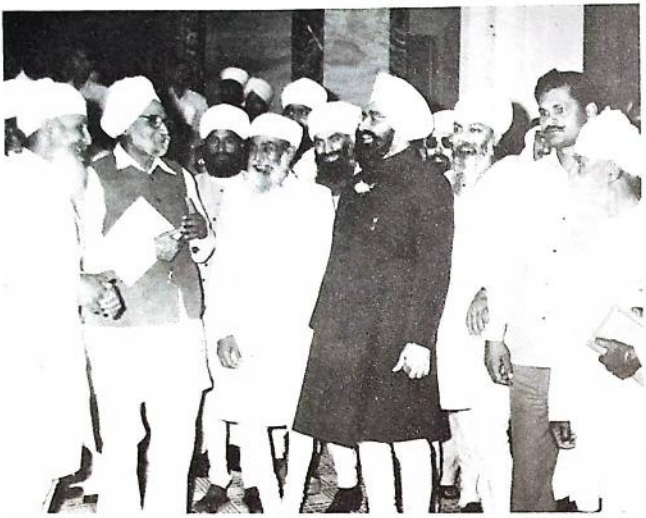

Giani Zail Singh and Sardar Darbara Singh deriving inspiration from Sri Satguru Ji and having a word of cheer and happiness with Him.

Mrs. Gandhi stressed the need for discipline and self-reliance and asked the people to emulate the Namdharis in eliminating social evils like dowry and emanicipating women.

—Hindustan Times.

The Prime Minister praised the Namdharis for opposing the dowry system and living simple and disciplined lives. She also appreciated their loyalty, noting that even when she was not in power they came to her with their best wishes.

—Times of India.

Namdharis came into existence way back in 1857 under the leadership of Satguru Ram Singh. They started a movement against the British from Sri Bhaini Sahib in Ludhiana.

—Evening News.

Mrs. Indira Gandhi appreciated the way of life led by the Namdharis. Their strive for self-sufficiency and the principles followed by them in all walks of life was a source of inspiration for all. Mrs. Gandhi recalled that her father Pandit Nehru had written to her in his famous letters about the Namdharis way of living. She added that her father had mentioned in one of his letters how the Namdharis used to run their postal service during the British days. She said her association with the Namdharis could be traced back to her childhood.

—National Herald.

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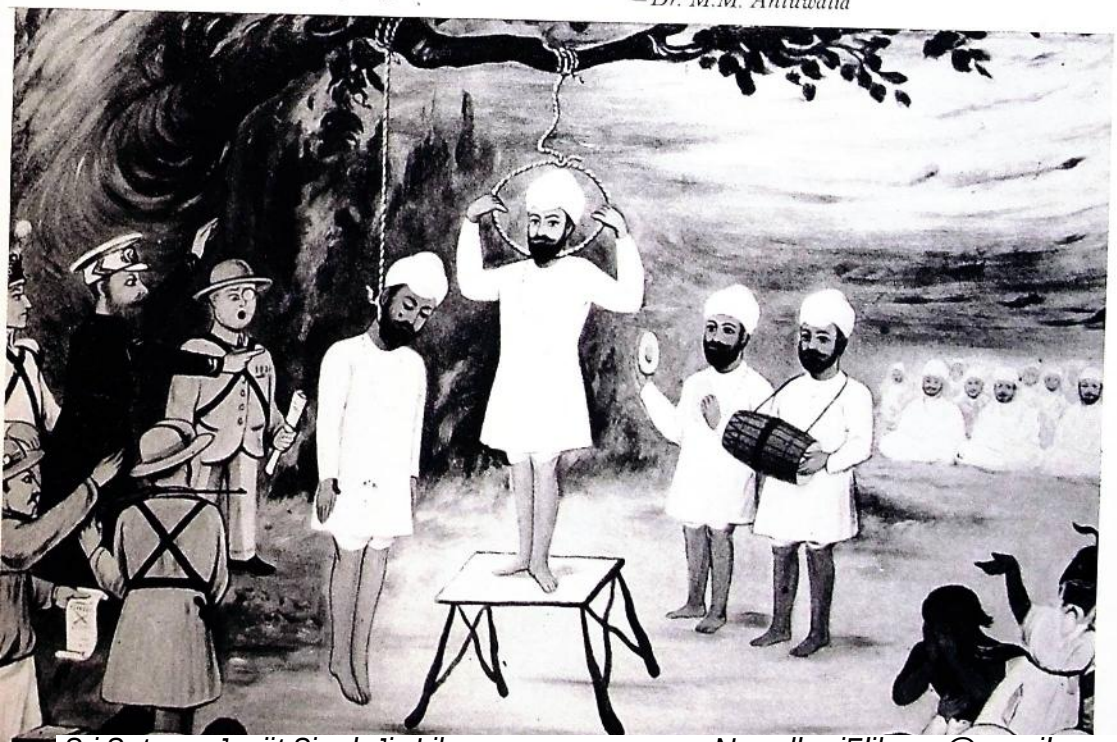
The blowing off the Kukas with guns by Cowen and Forsyth produced an electrifying effect throughout the length and breadth of the country, and even in the parliamentary circles of England.

—Dr. M.M. Ahluwalia



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